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INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

PRINCIPAL ITEMS OF INTEREST

Reunion of Families. — From Yugoslavia 194 children belonging to the German speaking ethnical minority in this country arrived on October 16 at the Austrian frontier. Five children, who were to join parents in Austria, France and the United Kingdom then left the convoy, their comrades going on towards West Germany. From there a few children continued on their journey to the East German Republic territory, to join their families.

As on previous occasions a delegate of the International Committee was present on the arrival of the convoy and doctors designated by the ICRC, assisted by a Yugoslav doctor, examined the children. This last convoy makes a total of 1,551 children of the German-speaking minorities who have been united with their families, thanks to the efforts of the ICRC and the Yugoslav Red Cross, assisted by the other Red Cross Societies concerned.

Greece. — From August 3 to October 6 the International Committee's delegates in Athens visited prisons in Argostoli, Corfu, Calamiou, Chania and Aegina, and the Alpha and Eptapyrgion prisons in Salonika. In these various places of detention they distributed 4,870 kgs of relief supplies, consisting in particular of foodstuffs, soap, blankets, medicaments and surgical equipment.

In addition, the anti-tuberculosis campaign, already mentioned in these pages¹ is proceeding normally. The beneficiaries

¹ See *Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge*, September 1952, (English Supplement) page 244.

are detained or exiled sufferers, or persons who contracted tuberculosis on account of hardships caused by the war or endured in recent years.

Repatriation of Greek Children. — The ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies have handed to the United Nations General Secretary a fourth General Report on their work in behalf of displaced Greek children. This document, which the *Revue* starts publishing this month, is dated October 1. It is accompanied by a letter (also reproduced in this number) in which the Presidents of the two institutions explain the reasons which have led the ICRC and the League to temporarily suspend their work in this field.

A sixth party of Greek children from Jugoslavia arrived in Salonika on October 2. This convoy was received by the special delegate of the ICRC and the League, the representatives of the Yugoslav and Greek Red Cross Societies and a member of the Swedish Red Cross Mission in Jugoslavia. The 69 children of this party were at once handed over to their parents.

Disabled. — During October the Disablement Section forwarded 120 Braille watches to the ICRC Delegation in Berlin. These were a gift from the International Committee for German warblinded. This Section also dealt with the purchase and despatch of two important consignments of Braille watches for the account of the Union des aveugles de guerre, Paris, and the Groupement des Aveugles d'Algérie.

Moreover, assisted by the Athens Delegation, the Section is still supplying artificial limbs and other apparatus to Greek amputees under detention. In this month thirteen disabled in exile have benefited by this action.

India. — The ICRC recently sent a third gift of medicaments to the Indian Red Cross in Madras to assist persons affected by the famine at present prevailing in Southern India. The value of this consignment was 20,000 Swiss francs.

Indochina. — During the month of September, the ICRC delegate in Vietnam visited 5 prisoner of war and military internee camps in Franco-Vietnamese hands. He distributed some relief supplies to the camp infirmaries.

Dissemination of the Conventions. — The complete text of the 4 Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 has been reproduced in volume No. 75 of the Treaty Series, published by the Secretariat of the United Nations in New York. The volume is completed by the Final Record and the Resolutions of the Diplomatic Conference, together with reservations made at the time of signing.

The Pakistan Red Cross Society has informed the ICRC that the Ministry of Defense proposes to make available for the Pakistan army 1350 complete copies and a number of brief summaries of the Conventions.

Television of ICRC films in France. — French television has included in its programme for the first fortnight of November three films of the International Committee: « Inter Arma Caritas », « Homeless in Palestine » and « Brothers all ».

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS AND THE KOREAN CONFLICT

It was announced in the Revue internationale de la Croix-Rouge last April that a collection of documents relating to Korea would shortly be published.

These documents have now been published¹; the collection consists of the most important and significant material relating to the efforts made by the International Committee of the Red Cross to give its traditional and impartial assistance to all victims of the conflict in conformity with the Geneva Conventions.

This first volume covers the period from the outbreak of hostilities until 31 December 1951.

A summary of the contents is given below.

On the outbreak of the conflict in Korea at the end of June 1950 the International Committee of the Red Cross approached the two Governments in Pyongyang and Seoul. By a first telegram of 26 June 1950 the International Committee, acting in accordance with its statutes, made the offer of its strictly neutral and impartial services for humanitarian purposes. Referring to the Geneva Conventions of 1929 and 1949, the Committee maintained that the fact of Korea not being party to these international agreements was no obstacle to the *de facto* application of the humanitarian principles set forth therein for the benefit of war victims. The ICRC declared its readiness to send a delegate to each of the Governments to examine the means of taking practical action on the basis of the Geneva Conventions. As the Korean question had since September 1947

¹ *Le Comité international de la Croix-Rouge et le conflit de Corée, Recueil de Documents*, No. 1, 26 juin 1950 — 31 décembre 1951, Genève 1952 In-4 (210 × 300), 255 pages.

been before the United Nations, Mr. Trygve Lie was also informed of these approaches ¹.

On 7 July 1950 the ICRC placed the services of the Central Prisoners of War Agency at the belligerents' disposal ².

Similar approaches were successively made by the ICRC to the Governments of the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Canada, Bolivia, Thailand, Turkey, France, the Philippines, South Africa, Greece, Belgium, Luxemburg, Colombia, Cuba and Ethiopia, as and when military action was taken by the said Governments in the Korean conflict. The Red Cross Societies of these countries were also informed.

On 3 July 1950 the first reply to these notifications reached Geneva, sent by the South Korean Delegate M. Bieri, who had just received from President Syngman Rhee the assurance that these proposals were accepted.

From the other States replies followed, which were duly notified by the ICRC to the North Korean Government. By a communication of July 13, addressed to the Secretary-General to the United Nations, this Government declared that the armies of the People's Republic of Korea would adhere strictly to the principles of the Geneva Conventions in regard to prisoners of war.

One of the International Committee's principal objects in view was to gain access for its delegates to the territories in conflict. By July 1950 it had been possible to set up a delegation in South Korea.

In the case of North Korea the International Committee was (and is still) unable to obtain authority for its delegate to enter the country, despite numerous approaches to the Pyon-

¹ As it had been ascertained that in some circles this offer had been interpreted as an attempt to act in a mediatory capacity, the ICRC specified (by a Press release and a cable message to the United Nations Secretary-General) that the true purpose of its intervention was purely humanitarian in conformity with the Geneva Conventions.

² As the Telegraph Services were not in a position to guarantee the safe arrival of direct messages to North Korea, the ICRC took the extra precaution of requesting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the USSR to forward these communications, of which copies were furnished to the Ministry in question.

gyang Government on the subject, and requests to the Chinese and Soviet authorities for transit visas—the most direct route to North Korea being through China or the USSR.

The following paragraphs give a summary of the Committee's principal negotiations with the two belligerent parties, and of the work it has accomplished or the plans it has had in view.

Approach to the two belligerent parties

On four occasions the ICRC found it was necessary to draw the attention of Commanders-in-Chief of the belligerent forces in Korea to the fundamental principles of the Geneva Conventions, and to the Committee's wish to be allowed to fulfil for both sides its traditional humanitarian task for the benefit of victims of the conflict and prisoners of war in particular. Two of these appeals (of 3 July and 6 August 1951 respectively) were more particularly concerned with the armistice talks which had just commenced.

General Ridgway, Commander-in-Chief of the United Nations Forces, assured the International Committee that these two appeals would meet with careful consideration. His reply was communicated to the Commanders-in-Chief of the Republic of Korea Forces and the Chinese Volunteers.

North Korea

The proposals put forward by the ICRC in the telegrams of 26 June and 7 July 1950 were followed by numerous approaches. The most important are described in the following paragraphs.

On 5 August 1950 the President of the ICRC made a personal appeal to the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Korea, urging the necessity for the application of the 1949 Conventions, to which the North Korean Government had agreed to give strict observance. The telegram also referred to the mission which the ICRC wished its delegates to assume, and urgently requested the Prime Minister to exert his influence to enable them to enter North Korea.

As already stated, the Korean question had been before the United Nations in 1949. On 29 August 1950 the ICRC requested M. Yakov Malik, Acting President of the Security Council, to advise the Council of the steps taken and the negative result. The International Committee was at pains to make clear that, while making further attempts of its own initiative, it would at the same time appreciate any impartial support in attaining its object—namely, the protection of war victims. The Government in Pyongyang was informed of this step.

The entry of Chinese Volunteers into the conflict led to the ICRC offering its services to the Commander-in-Chief of these troops on 8 December 1950. The North Korean and Chinese Governments were requested to ensure the transmission of the message.

Early in 1951 the President of the ICRC offered to go personally to North Korea to examine the various questions arising in connection with prisoners of war and other victims of hostilities (for instance the creation of a safety zone), which had previously been the object of numerous telegrams. The offer was renewed on January 24 and March 19; but no reply was received. At the same time the President of the ICRC suggested to the Chinese Government that he should visit Peking, to which this Government agreed. The main object of the President's mission was to examine with the Government and Red Cross Society of the People's Republic of China all questions of mutual interest. M. Ruegger was also able to discuss various matters connected with the Korean conflict, which called for urgent action (relief, safety zones, correspondence, news, etc.). Other interviews with the Chinese Red Cross took place in Geneva in May and December 1951.

The renewal of the armistice talks after an interruption of several weeks raised hopes of a solution of the special problem of the repatriation of prisoners of war. Referring to its numerous approaches in the past, the ICRC on 15 December 1951 again asked to be given the means of acting in accordance with the Geneva Conventions, and proposed to the Commander-in-Chief of the Republic of Korea Forces and to General Nam Il, Head of the North Korean Armistice Commission, to send delegates

to confer with them immediately. At the same time application was made to the Chinese and Soviet Governments for the delegates to be allowed a passage in transit through their territories.

The Head of the ICRC Delegation in South Korea requested, and obtained on December 19, an interview with General Nam Il.

On several occasions, but without success, the ICRC appealed for the support and comprehension of the Red Cross organisation in North Korea.

South Korea

It has been seen that the ICRC was able to send a delegation to South Korea within a very short delay. The delegation's work in favour of prisoners of war made rapid progress ; but difficulties occurred in regard to other humanitarian problems raised by the conflict. In this connection the ICRC applied on several occasions either to the General Secretariat of the United Nations, or to the United Nations Command, to enable its delegates to extend their activities, particularly in the fields covered by the provisions of the First, Second and Fourth Geneva Conventions. These approaches not having had the result hoped for, the delegates were obliged to confine practically all their activities to assistance for prisoners of war.

It will be seen later that they were able to a certain extent to give their services to civilians detained in South Korean prisons.

General work

As regards the Central Prisoners of War Agency (whose services were offered to the belligerents on 7 July 1950) it should be said that the lists of Korean and Chinese prisoners of war in the hands of the United Nations Forces, communicated by the Detaining Power, were regularly transmitted to the Pyongyang Government. By 31 December 1951 these transmissions covered 192,495 nominal records of prisoners of war (including 37,342 reclassified as civilian internees), 13,814 deceased and 235 seriously ill.

Reciprocity in the matter proved however to be unobtainable. The ICRC received only two lists concerning 110 prisoners in North Korean hands, notwithstanding repeated requests.

A certain number of enquiries and messages were sent to the Pyongyang Government ; and from May 1951 duplicates were sent to the Chinese Red Cross. No reply reached the International Committee of the Red Cross.

As regards *visits to camps and prisons*, over fifty prisoner of war camps were visited by the Committee's delegates. The detaining authorities and the Home Power of the prisoners visited were furnished with regular reports concerning these camps. The delegates also undertook, whenever this was found necessary as a result of their investigations, to take whatever steps were required with the authorities concerned.

A few civilian prisons were also visited by the delegates. The general conditions of the inmates gave rise to various interviews and applications to the South Korean authorities.

It may here be mentioned that the United Nations Command notified the ICRC of the geographical situation of the camps in South Korea ; and this information was transmitted to the North Korean Government. Here again no reciprocal action ensued.

In the matter of *relief action*, as in all other connections, the ICRC tried to give its impartial support to both sides, taking as its sole standard the needs of all victims of the conflict.

In the case of North Korea the ICRC received no reply to its various suggestions on the subject of prisoners of war or the other victims of the conflict. In addition a stock of medicaments constituted in Hong Kong in March 1951 could not be sent on ; the ICRC requested the Chinese Red Cross Society to take over the distribution of these medicaments ; but the Society did not think fit to accept.

On the other hand, the Hungarian Red Cross Society accepted the International Committee's offer of pharmaceutical supplies for reforwarding to North Korea, and there was every reason to hope for a safe arrival of this consignment, when the Society notified the Committee of the reshipment to Budapest of these supplies, which were subsequently sent back to Geneva.

As regards South Korea, from the outbreak of hostilities it was evident that needs were very great. Having been advised of the situation by its delegation, the ICRC could in turn inform various National Red Cross Societies. Some of them placed supplies at the Committee's disposal. Within a short time however the United Nations reserved the sole right for relief action in Korea. In these conditions the ICRC made efforts for its special position to be recognised, and for it to be agreed that relief supplies entrusted to its care should be distributed under its supervision and by its standards. So far it has not been successful. The Committee had consequently at an early date to abandon all relief action intended for victims other than prisoners of war, which greatly complicates its activity and that of its delegates, particularly in regard to detained civilians.

On the other hand the ICRC had all facilities for distributing relief for prisoner of war needs.

*CONTRIBUTIONS BY NATIONAL RED CROSS
SOCIETIES AND GOVERNMENTS TO THE
INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF
THE RED CROSS FOR 1952*

Contributions as on 30 September 1952

<i>Countries</i>	<i>National Red Cross Societies</i>	<i>Governments</i>
	(Swiss Francs)	(Swiss Francs)
Australia	25,680.—	—
Austria	—	8,450.—
Brazil	—	3,307.70
Canada	32,737.50	—
Ceylon	—	3,055.—
Chile	2,260.—	—
Columbia	2,000.—	15,000.—
Costa-Rica	480.—	—
Denmark	2,000.—	10,000.—
Dominican Republic	600.—	—
Ecuador	600.—	1,085.—
Finland	5,000.—	8,000.—
Greece	2,280.—	—
Guatemala	600.—	—
Holland	20,000.—	—
Iceland	500.—	—
Indonesia	—	15,000.—
Iran	460.30	—
Iraq	2,160.—	—
Ireland	1,560.—	—
Jordan	120.—	—
To report	99,037.80	63,897.70

<i>Countries</i>	<i>National Red Cross Societies</i>	<i>Governments</i>
	(Swiss Francs)	(Swiss Francs)
Carried forward	99,037.80	63,897.70
Lebanon	840.—	2,991.60
Liechtenstein	—	2,500.—
Luxemburg	600.—	1,000.—
Mexico	—	25,000.—
New Zealand	6,024.60	—
Northern Rhodesia	—	2,129.75
Norway	3,000.—	10,000.—
Paraguay	480.—	—
Philippines	3,840.—	—
San Salvador	132.—	—
Saudi Arabia	—	8,600.—
South Africa	—	48,760.—
Switzerland	—	500,000.—
Syria	1,560.—	—
Turkey	11,888.—	46,389.35
United Kingdom	24,460.—	—
United States	109,125.—	—
Venezuela	4,350.—	—
	<u>265,337.40</u>	<u>711,268.40</u>

The International Committee trusts that all National Societies will soon make the contributions requested of them by the Finance Commission (created in 1948 by the XVII International Red Cross Conference) and that for their part Governments will give it the regular financial support which was recognized as necessary by the Diplomatic Conference of Geneva in 1949.